City of Pekin

PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PEKIN, ILLINOIS, HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL 111 S. CAPITOL ST ON MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2025 AT 5:30 PM MAYOR MARY J. BURRESS PRESIDING

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council Member Abel.

Call to Order

City Clerk, Ms. Sue McMillan, confirmed all Council Members were physically present and logged in except Council Member Onken who arrived at 7:40 PM.

Attendee Name	Organization	Title	Status	Arrived
Rick Hilst	City of Pekin	Council Member	Present	5:30 PM
Karen Hohimer	City of Pekin	Mayor Pro Tem	Present	5:30 PM
Dave Nutter	City of Pekin	Council Member	Present	5:30 PM
Mary Burress	City of Pekin	Mayor	Present	5:30 PM
Lloyd Orrick	City of Pekin	Council Member	Present	5:30 PM
John P Abel	City of Pekin	Council Member	Present	5:30 PM
Chris Onken	City of Pekin	Council Member	Present	7:40 PM

Approve Agenda

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
SECONDER:	Mayor Pro Tem Karen Hohimer
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
ABSENT:	Council Member Onken

Approval of Minutes

4.1. City Council - Regular Meeting - January 13, 2025 5:30 PM

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**

MOVER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
SECONDER:	Mayor Pro Tem Karen Hohimer
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Onken
ABSENT:	Council Member Chris Onken

4.2. City Council - Special Meeting - January 17, 2025 4:00 PM

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
SECONDER:	Mayor Pro Tem Karen Hohimer
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
ABSENT:	Council Member Chris Onken

Public Input

Chris Hilton, President of the Peoria Association of Realtors (PAR), addressed the Council regarding the registration of vacant and foreclosed properties. Representing 800 members, she emphasized that PAR has been working since last October to ensure there are no unintended consequences for homeowners involved in foreclosure. She expressed concerns about the definition of foreclosed properties within the proposed ordinance. Due to these concerns, PAR is unable to support the ordinance as drafted and formally requested its deferral.

Cameron Bettin, Executive Director of the Pekin Park District, spoke on Consent Agenda Item 6.5 regarding the district's limited means of generating revenue through taxes and the exploration of alternative solutions such as solar energy. He explained that a ground-mounted solar installation would provide significant savings on electricity costs. These savings would allow for reinvestment into Parkside Fitness and the arena over time, as well as enable further improvements at Mineral Springs Park.

Zoey Carter addressed the Council regarding Agenda Item 8.6 Ordinance No. 4275-204/25 related to the homeless community.

Consent Agenda

Council Member Hilst requested to move Consent Agenda Item 6.5 Ordinance No. 4270-24/25 Approving Site Plan for Pekin Park District for the Construction and Operation of a Ground Mount Solar Array on the Property Near the Intersection of Stadium Drive and North Parkway Drive (Case SPR 2025-01) to the end of New Business.

RESULT:	**PASSED (5 TO 1)**
MOVER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick

SECONDER:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem John Abel
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
NAYS:	Council Member Hilst
ABSENT:	Council Member Onken

6.1. Accounts Payable to be Paid Proof List thru January 17, 2025

6.2. Financial Reports December 2025

6.3. Ordinance No. 4268-24/25 Approving a Variance for Illinois American Water for the Property Located at 328 Broadway Street to Reduce the Minimum Rear Building Setback From 10 Feet to 2 Feet (Case V 2025-01)

6.4. Ordinance No. 4269-24/25 Approving a Special Use for Robinson Outdoor, LLC for the Construction and Operation of an Off-Premises Electronic Multiple Message Billboard at 3405 Court Street (Case SU 2025-01)

6.6. Ordinance No. 4271-24/25 Approving a First Amendment to the Ground Lease Agreement with Sunny Pasture Solar, LLC to Clarify the Leased Area

6.7. Ordinance No. 4272-24/25 Approving a Third Amendment to the Pekin Court Street Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District Redevelopment Agreement with The Center for Prevention of Abuse to Extend the Deadline for Development Planning

6.8. Receive and File Resignation of Sharron Church from the Pekin Housing Authority Board with Regret and Appreciation for Her Service

6.9. Resolution No. 227-24/25 Approving the Mayor's Appointment of Debra Sue Graham to the Pekin Housing Authority Board for a Term of Five Years Until January 14, 2030

Unfinished Business

7.1. Ordinance No. 4242-24/25 Requiring the Registration of Properties that are Vacant or Foreclosed

RESULT:	**PASSED (5 TO 1)**
MOVER:	Council Member Dave Nutter

SECONDER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
NAYS:	Council Member Hilst
ABSENT:	Council Member Onken

City Manager John Dossey reminded the Council that staff met with the Peoria Association of Realtors (PAR) to refine the ordinance language, incorporating many of their suggestions, though some concerns remained.

Chief Building Official Nic Maquet stated that Council requested changes were made and proposed a $300 fee for outsourcing the process, noting East Peoria has similar regulations and emphasizing that the city should not bear the costs.

Economic Development Director Josh Wray discussed the ongoing disagreement with PAR regarding post-foreclosure status, explaining that the bank or insurance company is considered the owner of record.

Council Member Hohimer asked if maintenance costs were incurred for occupied foreclosed homes or mainly vacant ones. Mr. Maquet confirmed that the city maintains vacant properties, handling mowing and fence repairs, while Mr. Wray noted properties often enter a limbo stage post-foreclosure.

Council Member Nutter asked about the fee frequency, and Mr. Maquet clarified it is charged semi-annually.

City Attorney Ed Campbell stated that while additional fines may apply, the city would not immediately perform maintenance for the $350 fee alone, and some cases would require individual assessment. He assured the Council that the ordinance had been thoroughly vetted.

Council Member Nutter also raised concerns about contacting non-local businesses like Rocket Mortgage.

Council Member Orrick compared it to liquor code enforcement and asked if a local contact was required. Mr. Maquet confirmed that the ordinance mandates a local contact and applies to commercial properties, with clear vacancy definitions.

Mr. Wray read the conditions determining vacancy, and Mr. Maquet added that enforcement would be managed by the building department but likely outsourced.

New Business

8.1. Ordinance No. 4273-24/25 Amending Chapter 2, Article 6, Division 10 of the Pekin City Code Regarding Zoning Board of Appeals, Providing Compensation for Zoning Board of Appeals Members

RESULT:	**PASSED (4 TO 2)**
MOVER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
SECONDER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
AYES:	Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
NAYS:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Council Member Hilst
ABSENT:	Council Member Onken

City Manager John Dossey discussed Ordinance No. 4273-24/25, which proposes compensating Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) members $50 per meeting to improve membership quality, attendance, and engagement. Mr. Dossey stated that staff planned a budget of $4,200 for regular meetings and an additional $700 for special meetings, totaling $4,900 for fiscal year 2026. Attendance would be recorded by the zoning administrator and submitted to the finance department for payment. Chief Building Official Nic Maquet noted that while no local communities currently offer this compensation, some northern communities do. He also emphasized the ZBA's quasi-judicial role, which differs from other committees.

Council Member Orrick supported the item, stating it would show appreciation for the members' work.

Council Member Nutter raised concerns about whether ZBA members would be classified as part-time or contract employees. Finance Director Eric Dubrowski confirmed they would be W-2 employees, with taxes withheld and payments issued monthly. Council Member Nutter also emphasized ensuring legal compliance, and Mr. Dubrowski clarified that members could opt out of payment if they chose, similar to council members.

Council Member Hilst opposed the ordinance, stating it sends the wrong message, especially since ZBA members did not express a strong need for compensation. He reiterated that he would not support the measure.

8.2. Ordinance No. 4274-24/25 Approving a Pekin Court Street Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District Redevelopment Agreement with Kelly Madden for Improvements to the Property at 901 Derby Street

RESULT:	**PASSED (5 TO 1)**
MOVER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
SECONDER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council

	Member Nutter, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
NAYS:	Council Member Hilst
ABSENT:	Council Member Onken

The Council discussed Ordinance No. 4274-24/25, approving a TIF District Redevelopment Agreement with Kelly Madden for improvements at 901 Derby Street. City Manager John Dossey explained that Madden has a prospective tenant and is requesting TIF assistance through a five-year forgivable loan covering 50% of eligible expenses, up to $50,000. The loan requires the tenant to generate at least $5,000 in annual sales tax revenue. The prospective business, After Hours Auto, projects $250,000 in first-year sales, generating approximately $9,375 in sales tax revenue. Staff will verify sales tax receipts annually before granting loan forgiveness and recommended approval.

Economic Development Director Josh Wray confirmed Mr. Madden is working to improve the property and secure tenants.

Council Member Nutter expressed strong support and asked about the business. Mr. Madden confirmed that After Hours Auto, owned by Ben Pope, specializes in automotive restyling, bodywork, and vinyl printing for commercial vehicles and semi-trailers. Mr. Pope stated they anticipate starting with three employees and expanding to six.

Council Member Nutter inquired about penalties if the sales tax requirement is not met. Mr. Wray clarified that the business would be responsible for loan repayments in any year the requirement is not fulfilled.

Council Member Orrick questioned how much sales tax applies to auto repair services. Mr. Wray explained that labor is not taxed, but sales tax applies to parts, oil, and printing services. He confirmed that the agreement forgives $10,000 per year over five years, provided the business meets its tax obligation.

Council Member Nutter asked about zoning and occupancy requirements. Chief Building Official Nic Maquet stated the property is zoned B-3 but does not yet have an occupancy permit. Mr. Pope confirmed they have a lease in place but have not yet occupied the space.

8.3. Resolution No. 228-24/25 Approving Amendment Five to Project Service Agreement with Farnsworth Group for Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) Phase 3 and Phase 4 Improvements Construction Engineering

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem Karen Hohimer
SECONDER:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem John Abel
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
ABSENT:	Council Member Chris Onken

The Council discussed Resolution No. 228-24/25, approving Amendment Five to the Project Service Agreement with Farnsworth Group for construction engineering and loan administration services for the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Long-Term Control Plan (LTCP) Phase 3 improvements. City Engineer Josie Esker explained that the city lacks sufficient staff for project administration and observation, so Farnsworth Group will provide an on-site engineer, shop drawing reviews, and loan administration. She noted that Farnsworth has been involved with the project since its inception in 2012, and staff recommended approval.

Council Member Hilst inquired about the financial impact, questioning whether the funding had already been approved under a prior ordinance. Ms. Esker clarified that the expense would be incorporated into the loan, which will be paid over 20 years. Mike Lutz of Farnsworth Group confirmed that the loan ordinance was approved in November and that this agreement is necessary to ensure the loan covers the engineering costs.

Council Member Nutter expressed concern that the city might be paying on the loan twice. Mr. Lutz clarified that the loan has capacity for additional expenses and that the amendment is necessary to include engineering costs within the approved debt structure.

Economic Development Director Josh Wray further explained that the $26 million represents a debt ceiling, allowing the city to take on more Illinois EPA debt while ensuring the CSO project remains within the overall financial plan.

Council Member Nutter asked whether approving the agreement before the scheduled public hearing in February was premature. Staff assured the Council that the public hearing is a standard requirement for projects under EPA orders and is expected to proceed without issue. The hearing was scheduled at the EPA’s recommendation to help expedite the process.

8.4. Resolution No. 229-24/25 Approving Amendment Number 1 to Master Services Agreement for Professional Engineering Services on Construction Projects Agreement and Task Order with Maurer-Stutz, Inc. for Court Street Construction Engineering

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**

MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem Karen Hohimer
SECONDER:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem John Abel
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
ABSENT:	Council Member Chris Onken

The Council discussed Resolution No. 229-24/25, approving Amendment Number 1 to the Master Services Agreement with Maurer-Stutz, Inc. for professional engineering services related to the Court Street rehabilitation project. City Manager John Dossey explained that due to staffing shortages, the city requires additional engineering support for the project from 8th to 10th Street, as well as assistance with the section from 10th to Stadium. While the City Engineer will oversee the project, Maurer-Stutz will provide construction engineering and oversight as needed. Mr. Dossey noted that if staffing vacancies persist, additional fees may be required and would need Council approval.

Council Member Hilst inquired about budgeting for the project in the next fiscal year. City Engineer Josie Esker confirmed that funds have been allocated in the current budget and will be included in the next fiscal year as well. Council Member Hilst also questioned whether external engineering costs were anticipated, to which Ms. Esker affirmed that outside assistance had always been factored into the project plan.

Council Member Orrick raised concerns about the estimated engineering hours, noting that the projected workload of 2,000 hours exceeds a full year's work for two engineers. Ms. Esker clarified that while Maurer-Stutz is assisting with the 10th to Stadium section, the initial oversight of Court Street was performed by Millennia, not Maurer-Stutz, which had handled the Derby project. Ms. Esker added that it was hard to determine how many hours were needed since she's leaving the City.

Council Member Orrick expressed concerns over the cost and questioned the selection process. Ms. Esker explained that the city follows a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process rather than a bidding system, prioritizing firms with relevant experience and qualifications.

Council Member Nutter asked about the project timeline for the 10th to Stadium section. Ms. Esker confirmed that delays are likely, as the City may not meet the March letting deadline. If IDOT signs the contract by July, construction would not begin at an ideal time, making a spring 2026 start more likely. She also noted that Millennia was initially approached for this project but lacked the engineering staff to take it on.

8.5. Resolution No. 230-24/25 Approving New Vehicle Purchase Order with

Truck Centers, Inc. for a 2025 WesternStar 47X Tandem Dump Truck

RESULT:	**PASSED (5 TO 0 TO 1)**
MOVER:	Council Member Rick Hilst
SECONDER:	Council Member Dave Nutter
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	Council Member Dave Nutter
ABSENT:	Council Member Onken

The Council discussed Resolution No. 230-24/25, approving the purchase of a 2025 Western Star 47X tandem dump truck from Truck Centers, Inc. City Manager John Dossey explained that this purchase had been previously discussed during budget deliberations, where the original plan for two trucks was reduced to one in the final approved budget. As Truck Centers, Inc. is a cooperative purchasing agent through Sourcewell, the purchase did not require a formal RFP. Mr. Dossey noted that the truck needed to be ordered in advance for timely delivery and became available on January 3, 2025. Staff is now seeking final approval for the purchase.

Council Member Hilst inquired whether the truck had already been delivered but remained unpaid. Mr. Dossey confirmed this, explaining that the Public Works Director had been aware of its availability in October and was given the go-ahead for delivery. However, due to the Public Works Director's departure, the truck arrived without final approval, requiring this retroactive authorization.

Council Member Nutter expressed concern over ensuring a similar oversight does not happen again.

Mayor Burress acknowledged that many policies and procedures need updates to prevent such occurrences.

Council Member Hilst questioned why the truck was being paid for out of the sewerage fund rather than the general fund reserves. Mayor Burress and Finance Director Eric Dubrowski explained that the truck would be used for sewer-related purposes, including sludge transport.

City Engineer Josie Esker, confirmed that the street department frequently assists with sewer work and that similar tandem trucks have historically been assigned to wastewater operations. Ms. Esker noted that while an older model had previously been designated for wastewater use, it was no longer functional, necessitating this replacement.

Council Member Hilst expressed skepticism over the funding allocation, but the Mayor reiterated that the truck would be actively used for sewer-related tasks.

Council Members further discussed snow routes, employee assignments, and overall truck utilization before moving forward with the resolution.

8.6. Ordinance No. 4275-24/25 Amending Chapter 5, Article IV of the Pekin City Code Regarding Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Property to Prohibit Storage of Personal Property and Unauthorized Camping and/or Sleeping on Property Owned by the City of Pekin or Any Other Unit of Government or Governmental Agency within the City of Pekin

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem John Abel
SECONDER:	Mayor Pro Tem Karen Hohimer
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
ABSENT:	Council Member Chris Onken

The Council discussed Ordinance No. 4275-24/25, amending the city code to prohibit storing personal property and unauthorized camping or sleeping on public property. City Manager John Dossey emphasized that the ordinance is not intended to impose fines or jail time and that enforcement has prioritized connecting unhoused individuals with resources. He stressed the city’s efforts to balance community concerns with constitutional rights.

Police Chief Seth Ranney explained that the amendment primarily clarifies the definition of "sleeping" to allow legal enforcement of complaints, such as individuals lying on sidewalks. He reiterated that no citations have been issued and that the ordinance aims to provide support, not punishment. He noted that many unhoused individuals have declined assistance despite outreach efforts.

Chief Ranney assured the Council that enforcement will focus on outreach while maintaining public space accessibility.

8.7. Discussion of Residential Remodeling Incentive Program

The Council discussed the proposed Residential Remodeling Incentive Program. Economic Development Director Josh Wray introduced the topic, emphasizing the presence of blighted areas and explaining that the program would be funded through the TIF Program. He credited Dan Steinbach with bringing the idea to life and invited him to speak. Council members were provided with a packet with pictures of houses that Mr. Steinbach had previously renovated, and Mr. Wray noted that it had been presented to the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC), where there were initial reservations.

Mayor Burress stated that several contractors had approached her, confirming the need for such a program.

Council Member Orrick referenced the existing CDBG program, which is designated for owner-occupied structures, and noted that some homes had already received improvements such as new windows through that program. Chief Building Official Nic Maquet acknowledged that this topic had been discussed during a previous meeting.

Council Member Abel expressed support for the initiative and noted Mr. Steinbach's interest in the apartment complex on Pine Street.

Mr. Wray concluded by stating that he would begin drafting a policy for discussion at the next EDAC meeting.

6.5. Ordinance No. 4270-24/25 Approving Site Plan for Pekin Park District for the Construction and Operation of a Ground Mount Solar Array on the Property Near the Intersection of Stadium Drive and North Parkway Drive (Case SPR 2025-01)

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Lloyd Orrick
SECONDER:	None
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer
ABSENT:	Council Member Chris Onken

The Council reviewed Ordinance No. 4270-24/25, approving a site plan for the Pekin Park District to construct a ground-mounted solar array near Stadium Drive and North Parkway Drive. City Manager John Dossey stated that the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) unanimously approved the project.

Chief Building Official Nic Maquet clarified that the ZBA determined a special use permit was not required due to the array's permanent nature.

Council Member Hilst inquired about project costs.

Dan Griffin, a representative from Clean Energy Design Group, explained that there would be no cost to the Park District, as Federal and State incentives cover expenses, and his company owns and maintains the system. The Park District will receive energy benefits for 25 years, with an option to extend.

Council Member Hilst asked if the Park District had considered selling the land to the city for development. Park Director Cameron Bettin stated that

Park District Code restricts land sales over three acres, requiring a referendum or a land swap with another government entity for recreational use.

Other concerns included relocating the existing burn pile, fencing plans, and tree plantings along Broadway.

Council Member Hilst also questioned zoning variance details and site plan availability.

Any Other Business To Come Before The Council

Council Member Hilst inquired about whether the city has a policy regarding Ameren's scheduled power shutoffs. City Manager John Dossey stated that he was not aware of any policy and had recently been provided a new liaison with Ameren, whom he had reached out to. Council Member Hilst suggested that if no policy exists, the city should consider updating its language.

Council Member Orrick asked Police Chief Ranney if the department would issue an annual report similar to Washington's. Mr. Dossey responded that the City is currently releasing quarterly reports, with the intention of compiling them into an annual report.

Council Member Orrick also raised concerns about a code violation involving an elderly woman, asking if there was a way to assist. Mr. Dossey noted that if the situation involved a letter from Attorney Dancey, it was part of an ongoing issue.

Council Member Onken arrived at 7:40 p.m.

Executive Session 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) 6. The Setting of a Price for Sale or Lease of Property Owned by the Public Body

A motion was made by Council Member Onken seconded by Council Member Abel to move into Executive Session to discuss 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) 6. The Setting of a Price for Sale or Lease of Property Owned by the Public Body at 7:58 PM. On roll call voted all present voted Aye. Motion carried.

RESULT:	**PASSED (UNANIMOUS)**
MOVER:	Council Member Chris Onken
SECONDER:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem John Abel
AYES:	1st Alternate Mayor Pro Tem Abel, Mayor Burress, Council Member Nutter, Council Member Hilst, Council Member Orrick, Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer, Council Member Onken

Adjourn

There being no further business to come to the Council a motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Hohimer seconded by Council Member Onken to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried viva voce vote. Mayor Burress adjourned the meeting at 8:15 PM.